



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

FEB 10 2014

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Dear Mr. Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy


Thank you for your electronic correspondence of January 16, 2014 to President Barack Obama which was forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), concerning the chemical spill in Charleston, West Virginia.

EPA has been monitoring the incident and has been in close communication with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR) who have quickly responded to this emergency. They have and are taking steps to remedy the release and restore the drinking water for the people of the Charleston area.

From the beginning, the State response to the chemical spill, with support from Federal agencies has been conducted appropriately. The Federal government, including EPA, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, mobilized resources to support the state through every step of this emergency. EPA has been a constant presence in Charleston with its emergency response personnel posted at Freedom Industries throughout the incident. EPA staff from the Office of Drinking Water and Source Water Protection have been in contact with the WVDHHR and the West Virginia Water Company to provide assistance and advice. EPA laboratories have also been available to provide recommendations to the state and the water company regarding sampling and analyses of the drinking water. The work done by all of the State and the Federal Agencies has been conducted with mutual cooperation and communication.

If you have any questions related to any EPA activity, please contact Mr. Francis Burns, Chief of EPA's Western Response Branch at 215-814-3245.

Sincerely,


Kathryn A. Hodgkiss, Acting Director
Hazardous Site Cleanup Division

Enclosure



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An Overview of EPA's Drinking Water Program

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is the main federal law that ensures the quality of our nation's drinking water. The SDWA authorizes the EPA to set national health-based standards to protect against naturally-occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. EPA, states, and water systems work together to make sure that these standards are met. Most states directly oversee the water systems within their borders.

The SDWA also directs public water systems to develop source water assessments. The source water assessment is a study that defines the land area contributing water to each public water system, identifies the major potential sources of contamination that could affect the drinking water supply, and determines how susceptible the public water supply is to this potential contamination. Utilities and citizens can then use the publicly available study results to take actions to reduce potential sources of contamination and protect drinking water. Information about the assessment is included in the yearly consumer confidence report that customers receive from their water utility. Information is also available from your state source water protection program.

EPA has set standards for approximately 90 contaminants and indicators in drinking water. These contaminants, regulated under the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR), are legally enforceable standards that apply to public water systems. The chemicals cited in the recent spill event, 4-Methylcyclohexanemethanol (MCHM), propylene glycol phenyl ether (PPH) and dipropylene glycol phenyl ether (DiPPH), are not currently regulated by EPA under the NPDWR. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), few studies exist on the specialized chemical MCHM, and toxicologic information on PPH and DiPPH is limited.

However, EPA recognizes the need to continually evaluate new potential contaminants and collects data on unregulated contaminants through the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring (UCM) program. The UCM regulation directs public water systems to collect data for contaminants suspected to be present in drinking water, but that do not have health-based standards set under the SDWA. Data collected through the program are used to support analysis and review of contaminant occurrence, to guide the candidate contaminant selection process, and to support the EPA Administrator's determination of whether to regulate a contaminant in the interest of protecting public health. Additional information about the current round of UCM monitoring is available on our website:
www.water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/ucmr/ucmr3/basicinformation.cfm



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